

The Honorable Michael K. Powell
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Powell:

I'm writing to urge you to support the proposed merger between EchoStar Communications and Hughes Electronics. I believe the merger holds tremendous potential for my company in Clarksville, VA which sells EchoStar's DISH Network satellite TV service. The new company will offer a more attractive product to consumers, and this will mean more business for my company.

The majority of my customers are not able to subscribe to their local broadcast channels via satellite because they live in a small television market. This is the case because DISH Network does not have sufficient spectrum to provide all local channels in every one of the country's 210 local television markets. Currently, EchoStar offers local broadcast channels in only 36 markets. The merger will allow the combined company to stop broadcasting more than 500 identical TV channels. This will increase capacity and allow the new company to serve all TV markets in the U.S. This will allow me to offer my customers a more competitive alternative to cable in the near future.

None of my customers currently have access to cable or DSL high-speed Internet access service, but it is clearly something that many of them want given the number of times I have heard them ask about it. If the merger is approved, the new Echostar will provide the homes and businesses in my area the first affordable high speed Internet access service. My customers will benefit from this merger because EchoStar and Hughes can combine their resources, satellites, and spectrum to provide high-speed satellite Internet access service on a basis that is price and quality competitive with cable modem service and DSL.

Whether or not my customers have access to cable, and most do not, all of them will benefit from the new company's ability to better compete with cable. EchoStar has pledged to offer nationwide prices and services -- bringing the benefits of vigorous competition with cable -- to customers everywhere.

The new company has also pledged to offer new and enhanced services like interactive television and near video-on-demand. These products will allow satellite TV to go head-to-head in competition with cable companies and other competitors as they improve their technological capabilities.

The EchoStar-Hughes merger will allow the new company to offer a stronger satellite TV product nationwide, providing local broadcast channels in every television market, and new and enhanced television services such as HDTV, interactive TV, and more. In addition, the new EchoStar will be able to offer an affordable, high-speed Internet product to every zip code in the country. As a retailer for the DISH Network, I will benefit from increased sales. For all of these reasons, I urge you to support the EchoStar-Hughes merger.

Sincerely,

David Varner
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Clarksville, VA 23927